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Human rights questions: implementation of human rights instruments

Effective implementation of international instruments on human rights, including reporting obligations under international instruments on human rights

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains information on the effective implementation of international human rights instruments and focuses on the meetings of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies and the second and third inter-committee meetings on the methods of work of treaty bodies relating to reporting. The report also makes reference to the continuing response of the human rights treaty bodies to the proposals of the Secretary-General on reporting under human rights treaty bodies in his report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387 and Corr.1).

* A/59/150.

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1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/202, requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-ninth session on measures taken to implement the resolution, on obstacles to its implementation and on measures taken or planned to ensure financing and adequate staff and information resources for the effective operation of the human rights treaty bodies.

2. Information relevant to resolution 57/202 is contained in the note by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Commission on Human Rights at its sixtieth session (E/CN.4/2004/98) concerning the effective implementation of international instruments on human rights, including reporting obligations under international instruments on human rights. Information related to the specific treaty bodies is contained in the reports of the Human Rights Committee (A/59/40), the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/2004/22-E/C.12/2003/14), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/59/38), the Committee on the Rights of the Child (A/59/41), the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (A/59/18), the Committee against Torture (A/59/44), and the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (A/59/48). Additional information pertaining to the Committee on the Rights of the Child can be found in the reports of its thirtieth through thirty-sixth sessions (CRC/C/118, CRC/C/121, CRC/C/124, CRC/C/132, CRC/C/133, CRC/C/137 and CRC/C/141). Further information is contained in the reports of the Secretary-General on the financial situation of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (A/59/__); the status of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (A/59/__); the status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (A/59/310); and the status of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (A/59/306).

3. Developments concerning the programme to support human rights organs and treaty bodies; efforts made by the human rights treaty bodies to improve their functioning; the need to ensure financing and adequate staff and information resources for the operations of the human rights treaty bodies; cooperation with United Nations departments, specialized agencies, funds and programmes and mechanisms, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations; relations with the Expanded Bureau of the Commission on Human Rights, the Chairperson of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and States parties and cooperation with special rapporteurs/representatives, independent experts and chairpersons of working groups of the special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights and of the advisory services programme were addressed by the fifteenth and sixteenth meetings of human rights treaty bodies held at Geneva from 23 to 27 June 2003 and from 23 to 25 June 2004, respectively. The reports on those meetings, including the recommendations of the chairpersons, are contained in documents A/58/350 and A/59/__, respectively.

4. Pursuant to the request of the Secretary-General in his report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387 and Corr.1) that the High Commissioner for Human Rights should consult with the treaty bodies on new streamlined reporting procedures under the human rights treaties, a second inter-committee meeting of representatives of all treaty bodies was convened from 18 to 20 June 2003 at the Office of the High Commissioner for

Human Rights in Geneva, immediately before the fifteenth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies. The report of the meeting, including its recommendations, is annexed to the report of the fifteenth meeting of chairpersons (A/58/350). The inter-committee meeting focused its discussions on the report of a brainstorming meeting, hosted by the Government of Liechtenstein at Malbun from 4 to 7 May 2003, which had been attended by representatives of the treaty bodies, States parties, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations and which had discussed the Secretary-General's reform proposals. The report of the Malbun meeting was before the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session (A/58/123, annex).

5. A third inter-committee meeting was convened from 21 to 22 June 2004 to further consider options for coordinating and streamlining the work of the treaty bodies and harmonizing reporting requirements. The report of the meeting, including its recommendations, is annexed to the report of the sixteenth meeting of chairpersons (A/59/__).